

EN

P-000846/2026

Answer given by Mr Kadis
on behalf of the European Commission
(1.4.2026)

The conservation and management of critically endangered European eel must be based on fisheries and environmental considerations to tackle all human-induced mortalities.

Member States take various measures through their eel management plans (EMP) under the Eel Regulation¹ and other legal instruments, such as the Fishing Opportunities Regulation², Water Framework Directive³, Wildlife Trade Regulation⁴.

The implementation of the EMPs is variable and the targets of the Eel Regulation have mostly not been met, as confirmed by the evaluation of the Eel Regulation⁵ and by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)⁶. There are no signs of eel recovery. Further ambition is needed to address environmental mortalities, while continuing taking fisheries measures.

Temporary fishing closures are set at the EU level and promoted by the EU at international level. Member States do not allow trade from and to the EU, whereas marketing in the EU is allowed. Some Member States took more stringent measures by listing European eel as strictly protected or prohibiting eel fishing all year.

Under the Marine Action Plan⁷, the Commission called on Member States to improve the protection of eels and revise their EMPs or adopt the new plans in light of new knowledge and scientific advice⁸, and to strengthen a transboundary cooperation. The Nature Restoration

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 1100/2007 of 18 September 2007 establishing measures for the recovery of the stock of European eel, OJ L 248, 22.9.2007, pp. 17–23.

² Council Regulation (EU) 2026/249 of 26 January 2026 fixing for 2026, 2027 and 2028 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters, and amending Regulation (EU) 2025/202, OJ L, 2026/249, Council Regulation (EU) 2026/266 of 26 January 2026 fixing for 2026 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, OJ L, 2026/266, 30.1.2026.

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32000L0060>.

⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 of 9 December 1996 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein.

⁵ Commission's evaluation report (SWD/2020/0035 final) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0035> and external study in support of this evaluation <https://op.europa.eu/fr/publication-detail/-/publication/afe6ca55-5f58-11ea-b735-01aa75ed71a1>.

⁶ Details about a most recent progress of Member States in implementing their EMPs and measures under the Eel Regulation are provided in the ICES advice in subject published in 2025 https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/EU_request_for_technical_evaluation_of_the_Eel_Management_Plan_progress_reports/28381268?file=54121004 and in the ICES report from the Workshop in support of this advice https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Workshop_for_the_Technical_Evaluation_of_EU_Member_States_Eel_Regulation_Progress_Reports_for_Submission_in_2024_2025_WKEMP4_/28788749?file=54098411.

⁷ EU Action Plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries, COM/2023/102 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52023DC0102>.

⁸ Most recent ICES advice published in November 2025: https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/European_eel_i_Anguilla_anguilla_i_throughout_its_natural_range/27203028?file=59290940 and ICES report from the Workshop in support of this advice, where country reports are annexed <https://ices->

Regulation⁹ will further boost the restoration of coastal habitats and rivers¹⁰ where eels live, together with the requirements for measures to reach good status under the Water Framework Directive.

The Commission continues working with the Member States and stakeholders at EU, regional and international level to help rebuilding the eel stock.

library.figshare.com/articles/report/Joint_EIFAAC_ICES_GFCM_Working_Group_on_Eels_WGEEL_/30488120 . ICES Eel Stock Annex provides for a comprehensive assessment of the stock and the impacts on the stock: https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Stock_Annex_European_eel_i_Anguilla_anguilla_i_throughout_its_natural_range/24517486?file=43077457.

⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1991/oj/eng>.

¹⁰ Including the restoration of 25000 km of rivers to free-flowing rivers from 2020 to 2030, which is expected to foster fish migration, including for eels.